

## REPORT

### For “THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHT ON THE HUMAN RIGHT IMPLEMENTATION IN COUNTRY MEMBERS (THE THIRD CYCLE)”

The Center for Sustainable Development Studies (CSDS) is a Vietnamese non-governmental organisation focusing on youth empowerment, community development and international volunteer exchange. Founded in 2009 and based in Hanoi, CSDS develops and implements programs in different areas of the country to contribute to the sustainable development of Vietnam.

Our mission is to empower and support youth by providing them the skills and opportunities they need in order to become agents of sustainable change and development in their communities.

Our vision is a society where young people are valued and empowered to act as innovative contributors to a sustainable and equal world.

- 1. Youth Empowerment:** At CSDS, we believe in the power of youth as an important force contributing to sustainable community development. We work with youth, empowering them through alternative learning opportunities, civic engagement and youth policy advocacy.
  - Youth Leadership Development: CSDS provides capacity building for youth through transformative learning. CSDS also fund youth-led initiatives for SDGs.
  - Youth Civic Engagement: CSDS incubates and sponsors a number of youth initiatives to support and engage them in active citizenship.
  - Youth Advocacy: CSDS advocates for the recognition of youth’s participation in social development as well as support network of youth and volunteer groups in Vietnam to raise the youth voices and help them work together for positive change.
- 2. Community Development:** Our community development projects focus on educational opportunities for marginalized children and disadvantaged youth.
- 3. International Volunteer Exchange:** Through the international exchange program, we offer a wide range of volunteering and internship opportunities for local and international youth to support local community development in different areas of work, including childcare, language teaching, NGO support and community building.

## **1. Overview of youth sector in Vietnam**

- 1.1. According to the Vietnam's Youth Law (which is appended to its 2011 Youth Development Strategy), youth is defined as aged 16-30 years.
- 1.2. Vietnam has a youth law from 2005 and a youth development strategy for 2011-2020. The youth law (2005) provides the legal framework for the rights of young people. It mandates the State to develop policies for youth in areas such as education, employment, health and recreation. The law directly informs the Vietnamese Youth Development Strategy 2011-2020. Its goals include developing a highly patriotic generation, and creating a young workforce that meets the needs of modernisation.
- 1.3. Public Institutions: The Ministry of Home Affairs is mandated by the 2011 youth strategy to be the lead agency in the implementation of the strategy. It ensures relevant agencies incorporate the youth strategy's objectives in the design of programmes and plans. It is required to conduct a mid-term review of the strategy's implementation by 2015, and a final review by 2020. The National Committee on Youth of Vietnam is comprised of representatives from relevant ministries and departments, to advise the prime minister on issues relating to youth, and to coordinate their operations.
- 1.4. Youth and Representation: The 2005 youth law features two key youth organisations. The Vietnam Youth Federation (VYF) has a broad based membership of youth and youth organisations (note: it is named "Vietnam Youth League" in the youth law). VYF aims to organise its members "to actively participate in national industrialisation and modernisation". The Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union is the youth wing of the Communist Party of Vietnam. The youth law mandates that the union, along with other organisations, make proposals to the government on how best to address the needs of youth.
- 1.5. There is a strong movement of voluntary engagement of youth in development process, particularly in community services. Thousand of young people have initiated, run or participated in youth led activities around the country. These activities take place along side with those initiated and run by the youth public institutions.

## **2. CSDS's evaluation of youth participation in policy making in Vietnam since 2014**

- 2.1. There has been an increase in awareness of human rights among young people in Vietnam as the term has been made less sensitive by the government agencies and public presses.
- 2.2. There has been an increase in the opportunities for youth representatives from non-state sectors to participate in policy making process. In 2016-17, several youth leaders from voluntary groups were invited by the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) to participate in the discussion of the making of the Vietnam Sustainable Development Strategy 2030. These youth leaders brought the voices and perspectives from the so-called youth community based organizations (CBOs) in their newly founded youth network 2030 Youth Force Vietnam. Besides that, the online platforms used by a

number of policy making insitutions have enabled people, especially youth, to contribute directly to the new laws or policies.

- 2.3. The Vietnam Volunteer Center (VVC) has been actively engage youth led voluntary groups around the country to support their work but also to offer platform for their voice to be heard.
- 2.4. In the recent survey done by UNDP and CSDS, there is a relatively low awareness among young people in Vietnam (25%) about Sustainable Development Goals and the Vietnam National Sustainable Development Strategy. The SDGs include many areas that are directly linked to the insurance of human rights.
- 2.5. Civic education in the school system focuses only on introducing the rights of citizens to youth but yet on the human rights. It is recommended that the curriculum should be revised to ensure the differentiate the two term “human rights” and “citizens’ rights”.